

*Minnesota Forest Resources Council*  
Minutes  
MnDOT Training and Conference Center, Arden Hills  
May 14, 2013

**Members Present:** Bob Stine (Chair), Susan Solterman Audette, Alan Ek, Anna Dirkswager (alternate for Forrest Boe), Jan Green (alternate for Gene Merriam), Shaun Hamilton, Bob Lintelmann, Tim O'Hara (alternate for Wayne Brandt), Bob Owens, Dave Parent, Kathleen Preece, Deb Theisen (alternate for Mary Richards), Todd Tisler (alternate for Darla Lenz), Mike Trutwin

**Members Absent:** Greg Bernu, Forrest Boe, Wayne Brandt, Dale Erickson, Darla Lenz, Gene Merriam, Shawn Perich, Mary Richards

**Staff Present:** Dave Zumeta, Lindberg Ekola, Calder Hibbard, Amanda Kueper, Michael Lynch, Rachael Nicoll, Rob Slesak, Clarence Turner

**Guests:** Sue Burks (MN DNR), Tony D'Amato (U of MN), Anna Dirkswager (MN DNR), Amber Ellering (MN DNR), Geir Friisoe (MDA), Meg Hanisch (MN DNR), Lucy Hunt (MDA), Don Janes (private landowner), John Zobel (U of MN)

**Chair's Remarks**

Bob Stine opened the meeting with a round of introductions. Lindberg Ekola introduced the new MFRC Landscape Foresters, Amanda Kueper and Mike Lynch, and explained their roles in the Landscape Management Program. Amanda and Mike provided their respective personal background information.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes\***

Bob Owens approved, and Mike Trutwin seconded, the meeting minutes. *The minutes were unanimously approved.*

**Approval of Agenda\***

Bob Stine called for an adjustment of the schedule to maintain a quorum for action items. Mike Trutwin approved, and Alan Ek seconded, the amended meeting agenda. *The agenda was unanimously approved.*

**Executive Director Remarks**

Dave Zumeta expects the MFRC budget to remain flat for the next biennium. The Governor's proposed budget and supplemental budget, as well as the recommendations by the Senate House would keep the Council's budget at \$580,000. However, the Division of Forestry's budget allocation for the next biennium is looking promising.

## **Committee Reports**

### *Personnel and Finance*

The P&F Committee has not met recently but will meet after the legislative session and prior to the July 24 MFRC meeting to review budgets.

### *Site-Level*

No report. The committee has not met since the last Council meeting.

### *Landscape Planning/Coordination*

No report. The committee has not met since last Council meeting.

### *Information Management Committee*

Calder Hibbard reported that the committee reviewed the Council's private forestland study and related recommendations to prioritize goals and needs. Some legislators have shown great interest in this study. A post-legislative session update will be provided at the July Council meeting. The committee also discussed the terrestrial invasive species policy initiative and the possibility of a follow-up to the letter that was sent to the governor regarding invasives. The group also had a good initial discussion regarding forest productivity and voted on potential goals. The committee will pursue this topic further.

## **Written Communication to the MFRC**

None.

### **Committee of the Whole: Legislative session and budget update –Meg Hanisch, DNR Division of Forestry, in lieu of Forrest Boe**

Meg Hanisch reported that the legislative session is scheduled to end on May 21. Favorable results are expected for the Division of Forestry's budget, which has been reduced over the last three bienniums. The governor's recommended budget would grant \$4.0 million in general fund increases. The House and Senate recommended \$2.5 million and \$5.5 million increases, respectively. The Division expects to see at least a \$4.0 million increase.

Major revisions were proposed to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 90 - Timber Lands, and revisions to many forestry-related policies have been approved. Also, "Laws of 2011" related to state nurseries were repealed, allowing nurseries to sell seedlings to all soil and water and conservation districts as well as to private landowners. Alan Ek added that the state nurseries sale cap is still set at 10 million seedlings per year. However, this has not been a big issue; nurseries have typically been selling 4 -5 million seedlings per year. Meg said that the Division wants to improve initiatives for landowner management with the increased budget and do more activities such as hand-planting. Division representatives have been emphasizing to the Legislature the importance of investing in our forests to keep them healthy and productive into the future. A report is due at the end of December 2013 on the management of the state's nurseries and tree species in the face of climate change.

Dave Zumeta asked Tim O'Hara for an update on tax bills and the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA). Tim replied that the House had provisions that were unhelpful as far as a tax rebate. The Senate has proposed removing the \$100,000 cap on SFIA payments. Tax bill revisions currently are being reviewed in conference committee.

Shaun Hamilton requested an update on conservation easement land taxation and incentives for private management. Calder Hibbard reported that MFRC staff has met with Senator Skoe and other legislators to review SFIA provisions. Discussion ensued about the consistency of tax treatment of conservation easements. Calder mentioned the MFRC's previous efforts to assemble information on the counties' treatment of conservation easements. There is a high level of variation in treatment and perspectives.

**Update on ad hoc committee on field guide development and implementation goals – Bob Stine and Rob Slesak**

Rob Slesak provided background information on the revision of the site-level guidelines and field guide creation. He explained that the ad hoc committee was developed to address both creation of a field guide and development of guideline implementation goals. Committee members include several Council members and representatives from stakeholder groups. At the first committee meeting, Dave Chura of the Minnesota Logger Education Program (MLEP) will summarize the results of a survey that was conducted of loggers and Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership members. Rob is now soliciting input from DNR field staff. The first meeting is scheduled to take place at the Cloquet Forestry Center on May 29.

The ad hoc committee intends to create a pocket-sized field guide with concise language and a maximum of 100 pages. It should fit in a logger's pocket and be useful to private landowners. The goal is for the guide to be easier to navigate than the full guidelines, in addition to being less expensive to produce. There is no set limit to the number of guidelines that will be included in the guidebook. The ad hoc committee will only select guidelines for inclusion, not debate the guideline content. The timeline calls for approval of the field guide by the time the committee begins to look at the implementation goals. Implementation will never be 100 percent. Rob explained that Minnesota is on the cutting edge of setting goals. We want goals to be realistic.

**MOU on Private Forest Management (PFM) Landscape Stewardship – Lindberg Ekola**

Lindberg Ekola provided background information on the DNR's private forest management (PFM) program, including the fluctuation of roles and responsibilities as well as reduced budgets and grant funding in recent years. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Private Forest Management Landscape Stewardship is meant to draw agencies together to define roles and responsibilities more clearly in the face of ongoing challenges in serving 200,000 private landowners in the state. Lindberg has been working with Gary Michael and his predecessors in DNR PFM on community-based approaches to foster collaboration.

The MOU was included as a recommendation in the MFRC Private Forestland Study as a way to identify ways to work more collaboratively despite budget cuts and other changes. Page two of

the draft MOU suggests creating a leadership team to give direction to a technical team. Hopefully a new draft MOU will be compiled by fall or winter of 2013.

Bob Owens inquired about the Department of Commerce's involvement. Lindberg replied that Commerce is not involved at this time, but could be. Bob Stine asked for clarification of team membership. Lindberg responded that about 1,450 organizations are involved in private forest management. Dave Parent mentioned that there also are a number of private landowners that are vested in forest management. Agencies involved need to do outreach to determine landowner interest. Dave also asked about the role of nonprofits and private entities. Lindberg responded that a series of agreements are likely required to involve these groups. Bob Owens commented that fragmentation of ownerships will continue, affecting recreational groups such as the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association. Lindberg agreed, saying that it is important to integrate with these groups, as they can provide excellent outreach.

Lindberg provided an overview of Minnesota landscape stewardship projects. These examples highlight a major benefit of landscape stewardship: bringing diverse groups of people together to prioritize actions via a streamlined process. Bob Stine reiterated that this is not an action item. It is a presentation to spark thinking about what the Council's role should be. The Council could potentially be the "glue" that holds the MOU together. Bob asked if there were any objections to our involvement in this. There were no objections. A suggestion was made to focus on the southeast area of the state in light of increasing concerns about fracking.

**Prospective 2014 quarantine of Cook and Lake Counties for Gypsy Moth** *Bob Stine, Lucy Hunt, Gypsy Moth Coordinator, MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Sue Burks, Invasive Species Program Coordinator, DNR Division of Forestry*

Dave Zumeta introduced Lucy Hunt and Sue Burks. Dave Zumeta provided context for the presentation, saying there are many implications of this proposed quarantine. It's been a long time coming, and it may finally be here.

Sue Burks provided information on the ongoing discussions regarding the quarantine proposal. The majority of state is not infested by gypsy moth. Sue said that the state and federal agencies involved have a strong partnership. She then provided background information on agencies' roles during the various stages of infestation. There are three stages of infestation and three federal programs involved. The uninfested stage involves outreach and detection trapping funded by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. In the transition zone, Forest Service- and Forest Health Protection-funded eradication of isolated populations is attempted. The MDA is the lead state agency before a pest becomes permanently established. Finally, with populations throughout the landscape, the DNR takes the lead with the Forest Service. The DNR is now preparing to take over for gypsy moth control in Minnesota. The changes in agency authority over time can be confusing to the general public.

Lucy Hunt explained that the MDA is the lead state agency regarding quarantines in Minnesota. Gypsy moth populations are building in the state, and there are reproducing populations in

Lake and Cook counties. A quarantine would provide protection against and temporary containment of populations that are already in the two counties. A quarantine in Minnesota would be a continuation of a national quarantine program. It would control movement of: 1) trees with and without roots; 2) logs, pulp, pulpwood and other products; 3) personal and recreational items; and 4) a catch-all category covering any means of conveyance. Gypsy moth females lay eggs on just about everything; this is why the quarantine regulations are quite broad. There are a range of compliance agreements. Certification of items can prove that they were properly inspected.

Discussion ensued regarding the difficulty of compliance checks, especially of personal recreational items. This led to questions about the impact on logging trucks. Lucy explained that implementation happens in the woods; however, more information is needed on who is logging in the area. Quarantine training will be provided this fall. It will be similar to training provided for forestry best management practices. The MDA is working with Dave Chura of MLEP to develop a quarantine training requirement in logger certification. Inspections have been implemented at landings in quarantined areas. Sue added that the DNR works closely with loggers and will provide information to those with open timber permits and at fall timber auctions. Both the DNR and MDA have been in contact with the counties. Tim O'Hara added that all milled wood is tracked.

There was discussion about the merits of the proposed quarantine weighed against potential increased costs to the forest industry. The industry already faces many other economic challenges. Lucy mentioned a survey on the MDA website ([www.mda.state.mn.us/gypsymoth](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/gypsymoth)) to obtain feedback from stakeholders. Bob Stine commented that presumably, in time gypsy moth will be problem outside of these two counties. It would be wise to become involved in the discussion as early as possible. It is too late for Cook and Lake counties.

**Proposed follow-up letter to Governor on forest-related terrestrial invasive species\* –**

*Kathleen Preece and Calder Hibbard*

Kathleen Preece provided an overview of the Information Management Committee's previous actions regarding terrestrial invasive species, including a review of site-level guidelines, submission of an unfunded LCCMR proposal and a compilation of information on invasive species' impacts. The committee also developed a draft letter to the governor recommending actions to address terrestrial invasive species affecting forests that was approved by the Council and delivered in November of 2012. Since the letter was sent, the MFRC has communicated with the governor's staff but has not received a response from Governor Dayton. The committee would like to follow up with an additional letter to indicate the urgency of this issue.

Calder Hibbard provided a summary of what the terrestrial invasives species study would entail. He is working now to resubmit a revised proposal to the LCCMR and other funding sources. Discussion ensued regarding the body charged by the governor to implement the study. There was concern surrounding the appropriateness of charging the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) with this task. MISAC has not been recognized as a body similar to the

MFRC, and it exists mostly as a forum for sharing information. Several members encouraged the Information Management Committee to find organizations that have a larger stake in this issue. Shaun Hamilton commented that involving more stakeholders will lead to a more comprehensive approach. The Council could take on the role of a catalyst.

The Council discussed the costs of management and inaction as well as prioritization of actions related to the control of invasive species. Calder commented that the topic of forest health is a main policy issue for the Council, and we have statutory authority to advise the governor. Bob Stine added this it will not do any harm to revise and send the letter. The Council should think more about this high priority item and work soon with potential partners.

Bob requested a vote on sending the letter. Dave Parent moved, and Alan Ek seconded, the motion. *The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Projections of stand mortality for extended rotation forests - Alan Ek will introduce John Zobel, Department of Forest Resources, University of Minnesota**

Alan Ek introduced John Zobel, who recently completed his Ph. D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota. John developed a whole stand, lifespan yield model for the red pine and aspen forest types in Minnesota. John described the reasons to create a new model. Traditional yield curves do not provide decreases in yield with age; this has no basis in reality. With more older forests on the landscape, it is important to represent the entire lifespan of a stand and explore implications of Extended Rotation Forestry. There is very limited data for older stands, so John created a model to supplement the lack of data. The model works best for an even-aged system, but also works for uneven-aged management. The data underlying the model can be used to create yield tables.

Questions were raised about the model's usefulness for other applications such as evaluating carbon sequestration potential and regeneration. John replied that the current model does not consider these other factors, but future editions may. John also added that the model does not take economics into account; the model provides only a "snapshot" of the forest.

**Emerald Ash Borer research study results – Alan Ek, Tony D'Amato, University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, and Rob Slesak**

Alan Ek introduced Tony D'Amato, Professor at the University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources. The D'Amato lab is conducting a study in northern Minnesota to assess how black ash forests function and how they may react to emerald ash borer (EAB). There is limited information on these systems. Tony provided an overview of black ash silvics and management options. Tony explained the methodology of the study and emphasized the very high vulnerability to EAB of black ash lowland systems. Considering this, site-level resistance should be built through increasing non-ash components and diversifying stand and age structure.

Tony explained that black ash dominates these sites for a reason; black ash is strongly competitive in the right sites. Also, age structures and experience with declining stands

highlight the importance of maintaining overstory cover when attempting to diversify areas (i.e. maintain forests when possible). To better understand the effects of regeneration harvests and EAB on black ash forests, Tony is collaborating with the MFRC and the Chippewa National Forest (very large chunks of black ash forests exist in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests) in a related study. The disturbance simulations were performed last winter.

Jan Green asked about ash decline. Tony responded that it may be part of the natural cycle and may be exacerbated by road building and disruption of the hydrological cycle, in that these disturbances make it more difficult for stands to recover. A question was raised about the seriousness of the EAB situation. Tony replied that once EAB arrives, most black ash will die. Options for treating these stands may be limited if there is no pulp market for these trees. Substitute species for black ash swamps are of higher value. Some landowners are taking advantage of the popularity of ash veneer in Asian markets. The highest value of these systems, however, lies in the impact of the ash trees on the hydrology, not necessarily in the trees themselves. Elm would be the perfect replacement tree for these systems in the absence of Dutch elm disease.

#### **Public Communications to the MFRC**

Mike Trutwin announced an upcoming Memorial Day service in Sartell, MN for those affected by the Verso Mill fire last year.

#### **MFRC Member Comments**

Bob Stine moved, and Shaun Hamilton seconded adjourning the meeting. *The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.*